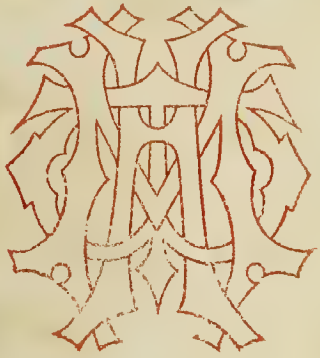
POEMS



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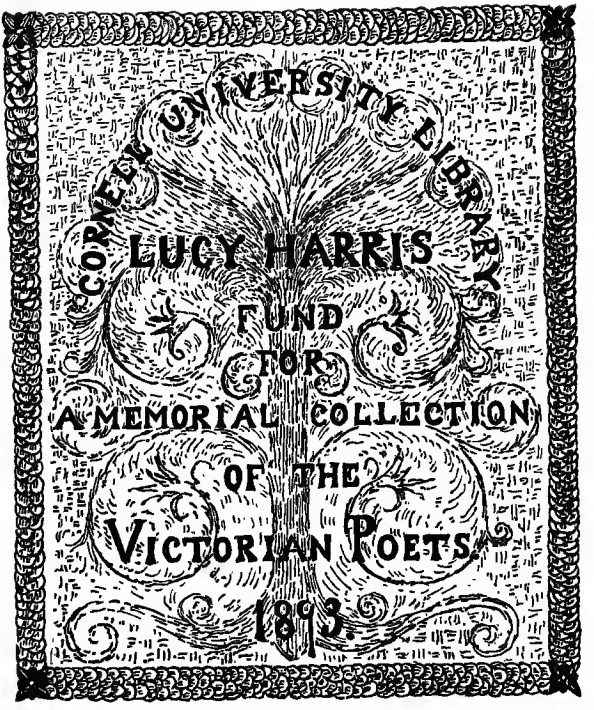

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POEMS.

POEMS

BY

WILLIAM HURRELL MALLOCK

'The mount is mute, the channel dry'

LONDON
CHATTO & WINDUS, PICCADILLY
1880

LONDON
Printed by STRANGEWAYS & SONS, Tower Street, Upper St. Martin's Lane.

To

MY OLD FRIEND, AND PRIVATE TUTOR,

THE REVEREND W. B. PHILPOT,

LATE OF LITTLE HAMPTON, SUSSEX,

UNDER WHOSE CARE MY HAPPIEST DAYS HAVE BEEN SPENT,

AND IN WHOSE HOUSE

MOST OF THESE POEMS WERE WRITTEN.

PREFACE.

THE POEMS *in this Volume, with but one or two exceptions, were written between my ſeventeenth and my twentieth year. A few months ago I had no thought that I ſhould ever be thus drawing them from their privacy; but a certain number of friends who have ſeen them in manuſcript tell me that they have taken ſome intereſt in them, and that, were they publiſhed, others might do ſo likewiſe. This has been repeated to me ſeveral times lately, and my vanity, if not my judgment, has made me think there may be ſome truth in it. But in acting on this ſuggeſtion with all a parent's pleaſure, I*

cannot but ſmile as I reflect how no fame or applauſe that anything could bring me now could ever equal the pleaſure I ſhould once have felt could I have only ſeen theſe verſes publiſhed.

As for their own merits, and their varying tone and ſentiment, the reader muſt judge them as he pleaſes; but a writer himſelf, who looks back over ten years at them, may be allowed the forlorn hope that what he ſees of good in them he has at leaſt tried to develop, and what he ſees to be regretted he has at leaſt tried to outgrow.

March 1880.

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PROËM

TO POEMS COLLECTED IN MSS.

AN. ÆT. 18 AND 19.

'Neque chorda ſonum reddit quem vult manus et mens.'

PROËM.

FAIR flocks of rainbow-plumed imaginings,
Flown hitherward from ſome untrodden dell
In the ſoul's mid foreſt, ſcarce acceſſible!
Lured by the luſtre of your ſheeny wings,
Perforce I chaſe you, and with patient care
Outſpread in vain—in vain too oft, the ſnare;
Or take at laſt but bruiſed and faded things.
Yes, wayward Speech, thou doſt ſtill falſify
Mine inmoſt thoughts and deareſt; and ſtill I
Mourn over all thy maimed interpretings—
For all the ſubtler ſenſes 'ſcaped like birds
From the coarſe meſhes of theſe woven words—
For the poor half-truth left, ſo like a lie!

An. æt. 19.

A CHILD'S LOVE-SONG

AND

A BOY'S LOVE-SONG.

A CHILD'S LOVE-SONG.

(COMPOSED IN A SWING.)

I.

THE breezes are ſighing
About me, above me!
Oh, I ſhould be happy,
If Celia would love me!

II.

But without Celia's love
The breezes may blow;
And, for all that I care,
To the devil may go!

An. æt. 8.

A BOY'S LOVE-SONG.

I.

IF Celia won't have you, fond lover,
Why ſquander in ſighing the day?
If all your entreaties won't move her,
Reſent it, and meet her half way.

II.

Suppoſe you were now to poſſeſs her,
Her beauty and all you deſired;
How ſoon you would ceaſe to careſs her!
How ſoon of the beauty be tired!

III.

Then ſing a more reſolute meaſure,
Nor ſquander in ſighing the day;
It cannot be much of a treaſure
Whoſe charms with poſſeſſion decay.

An. æt. 13.

A BOY'S DREAM.

A BOY'S DREAM.

I.

MY life is overhung with cold grey ſhade
Of frozen clouds that will not weep and die:
Hope's orphan flowers hang languid heads, and fade
'Neath ſuch a wintry ſky.

II.

But though my ſun be quenched, of thy pale beams,
O Moon enchantreſs, let the man forlorn
Weave for his ſoul a dædal woof of dreams,
Proof againſt all cold ſcorn!

III.

Yes, let me here forget my life, my home,
In a rapt dream o'er theſe hypaſtral ſeas,
Charmed by the luminous fall of ſilver foam,
In foamy melodies:

IV.

Far gazing where the ocean moonlight fades
Into the ſtarry myſtery of night;
Watching the wandering ſhudders of ſoft ſhades
That ſkim the quivering light;

V.

Till, as ſhed ſnows in water, more and more
That which I am be loſt in that I ſee.
Oh, dreamy, foamy moonlight! dreamy ſhore!
Oh, dreamy ecſtaſy!

VI.

My ſpirit's plumes expand, and a mute wind
Lifts them, and I am floated far away
From this dull world of loveleſs men and blind,
Cloſe wedded to their clay,

VII.

Into new realms of buried myſtery,
Whoſe ſecret gates ſome ſudden hand unbars,
Where the wild beauties of old ages lie,
Looked down upon by ſtars.

VIII.

Strange ſounds and muſical are on the gales,
Of tongues long mute; and lo! beneath my eyes
Sweep carven-prows, and ſhadowy glimmering ſails
Of ancient argoſies;

IX.

And triremes with the meaſured flaſh of oars,
And foam-wan plumes, and breaſtplates luminous,
And calm-eyed pilots, helming toward the ſhores
Of leagured Pergamus.

X.

My ſoul goes forth over the iſles of fame,
White temples, and dark frondage; panting ſeas
That waſh with wavering fringe of liquid flame
The ſacred Cyclades.

XI.

Now once again the ſtartled ſtars behold
Wan throngs of faces turned towards the ſkies;
Phantoms adoring phantom gods, in old
Hypæthral ſanctuaries,

XII.

That ſtand mid lawns, for ages long unknown,
  Iſlanded in the deep heart of foreſt-ſeas,
And reſonant ever with the low lorn moan
    Of Hamadryades.

XIII.

Now great lone lands, with feveriſh interchange
  Of hollow ſhadows and pale ſickly gleams,
Perplex my eyes; wild places, vague and ſtrange,
    And veined with ſilvery ſtreams—

XIV.

Streams rock-born, down from ſplintered mountains daſhing,
  Girdling below, with ſparkling lines of light,
White ſkeletons of old mammoth cities flaſhing
    On purple plains of night.

XV.

Riſing o'er billowy mountain-lands unknown,
  Wrecks of faint light ſtrewn on a ſhadowy ſea,
The aching moon looks down upon the lone
    Caucaſian Calvary;

XVI.

And peering, pale over pale mountain ſnows,
On the worn watcher and the cruel chain,
Carves on the livid marble of his brows
Keen hieroglyphs of pain.

XVII.

He lieth there, calm, beautiful, and bound,
Walled by vaſt crags and roofed by fretted ſkies.
What anguiſh ſpeaks in that pure gaze profound
Of ſtar-ward, earneſt eyes!

XVIII.

But what is here—this darker priſon-place—
Theſe friends with muffled faces and held breath?
And what is this—this one unearthly face—
This hemlock-draught of death?

XIX.

Ah ſee, he lifts the elixir to his lips,
And, like the moon unclouding by degrees,
Breaks from the dimneſs of terrene eclipſe
The ſoul of Socrates.

XX.

Hail, my one love, old beauty born again,
Dear lovely things of ages long gone by,
Whoſe laſt ſmiles miniſh from the world, as men,
Grown loveleſs, multiply!

XXI.

As a lone ſitter on a ſea-rock craves
Headlong to plunge into the clear green ſeas,
Catching the wavering luſtre through the waves
Of ocean-palaces,

XXII.

So have I longed, ye beautiful dead years,
For you and yours, ſeeing the things that be
Touch me with cold that nips, or heat that ſears,
And have ſmall part in me.

XXIII.

For what to me is man, whoſe ruthleſs tread
Tramps beauty's flame to aſhes day by day;
And, even with its death not ſatiated,
Sweeps the poor duſt away?

XXIV.

Wherefore, dear things of ages long gone by,
My one own love, dead Beauty born again,
I hail you and I worſhip you—yea I,
An alien among men,

XXV.

Unloved of all. But ye, ye long-cloſed lids,
Unfold for me; comfort me, ſplendid eyes!
Smile lips, embalmed beneath the pyramids
Of heaped-up centuries!

XXVI.

Spurn me not, neither ſcorn me, peerleſs throng,
Who roam immortal through the fields of verſe.
Queens of the wizard univerſe of ſong,
Be ye my comforters!

XXVII.

Lo, yonder—who is ſhe, who wildly-eyed
Yearneth for ſomewhat o'er the ſtar-lit ſea,
From yon wet rock, whereround the ſluggiſh tide
Sobs ſlow and heavily?

XXVIII.

The flagging wind floats her looſe fluctuous hair,
As waves float weed. Unheeded creeping down,
Her raiment leaves her glimmering boſom bare:
Sea-dews are moiſt thereon.

XXIX.

'Ah, whither through thine eyes hath thy ſoul fled?
My Dido, he will not return to thee!
We twain are lone: let twain be comforted.
Doſt thou think ſcorn of me?

XXX.

'Kiſs me, ſweet lips, that have nor cold nor heat,
Thou fair, ſweet, ſuperſenſual ſenſuouſneſs!
Lull me with love that ſees itſelf is ſweet,
With paſſion paſſionleſs!'

XXXI.

The eyes that have been gazing otherwhere
Droop down on mine, as theſe words ſtrike her ears:
And lo, the hard dry ice of glazed deſpair
Thaws in ſlow large warm tears.

XXXII.

The relaxed lips, half opening, dreamily,
Breathe ſoft things over me, her worſhipper—
So ſoft they all melt in the moiſt wind's ſigh,
And the ſad wave-water.

XXXIII.

I only feel on mine thoſe lips of hers,
And the ſouls mingling, where the twain mouths cling,
In harmony like ſun-blent rain-colours,
Or ſtricken ſtring with ſtring.

XXXIV.

And each ſoul's aching melts in ſighs, as ſnow,
Spring-charmed, in dew; love making all paſt pain
Sweet ſadneſs, as a red ſun ſets a-glow
A dying day of rain.

XXXV.

But, hark! a gaſping wind is gathering:
I catch a ſudden ſprinkling of blown ſpray.
I ſtart: my bubble burſts, and everything—
My whole dream—falls away.

XXXVI.

Numbed Self ſprings up; and, freſh from trance, once more
Clutches my ſoul, once more made void and cold;
And I, lone on this old familiar ſhore,
With ſtupid eyes, behold

XXXVII.

A great night hung with ſtarlight, ſtooping down
Over the tumbled ſilver of the ſea;
And hear a voice, 'Is beauty wholly gone?
Let theſe things comfort thee:

XXXVIII.

'And Love, and Good, and Beauty, one thing crowned
With many names, lead on thy ſwerveleſs ſoul
By ways wherein but parts of good are found,
To realms where reigns the whole.

XXXIX.

'Thou doſt not ſeek the ſoul in coffined clay:
Then ſeek not Beauty in the blind, dead years.
Onward! This life will ſoon have paſſed away,
Of priſoned ſtraining tears.

XL.

'To thee the Nile of Time is fourceleſs ever!
Vain, vain to tempt the upper myſtery!
Trim thou thy ſails for where the buffeting river
Meets with God's boundleſs ſea.'

Littlehampton, an. æt. 17.

SONG.

SONG.

I.

I DID not offer thee up mine heart,
Nor did I aſk, thou know'ſt, for thine.
I only ſaid, 'Until we part
Lend it, and I will lend thee mine.'

II.

And have we paſt thoſe hours in vain?
We met, we ſmiled—we ſmile, we ſever.
Is it in vain that thus we twain
Have met, though thus we part for ever?

III.

In vain? Shall I ever forget your eyes,
Or the love that died of deſpair in me?
For my love but lived in deſpair's deſpite,
Like a new-born babe that ſees the light
For a moment, and ſmiles, and dies,
And lives in its mother's memory.

An. æt. 16.

LUX MALIGNA.

LUX MALIGNA.

HER eyes were like Cocytus' midnight deeps,
When far in the tranſparent darkneſs ſleeps
The moon, whoſe face, as the waves tremble, flaſhes
In oily ripples, mid the reedy laſhes
Dying inceſſantly. Who would not ſhrink,
Shivering, from that ſad ſtream's uncertain brink,
Fancying the noiſeleſs volumes ſliding o'er
Strange horrors unconceived, and brimmed with ſtore
Of lizard-footed things? So none there were
Who loved thoſe eyes, and the ſtrange moonlight there.

An. æt. 18.

A FRIEND.

A FRIEND.

FRIEND let me call you—may I? friend to me:
And like a caſket let that wide word be,
Wherein, perchance, ſome coſtlier treaſure lies—
Wherein we hide, in clouds of cloſe eclipſe,
The faltering few things known to lips and lips—
The many mute things known to eyes and eyes!

An. æt. 18.

ALTER ET IDEM.

ALTER ET IDEM.

I.

THIS day, in this ſame place, we met laſt year,
And Abſence, the omnipotent ſeverer,
Since then on thee and me hath worked his will;
I would, my laſt year's love, as thou ſtand'ſt here,
My laſt year's love, I would I loved thee ſtill!

II.

Does not this place ſeem ſtrange to thee and me—
This freſh cool waſh and whiſper of the ſea,
We knew ſo well together? Oh, how ſtrange!
All's out of tune now—jars diſcordantly.
This old known place, I would it too would change!

III.

How miſerably the ſame thoſe cliffs of grey!
And ſee—a boat again, too, in the bay!
And yon lone ſea-girt grey rock, ſunſet-lit
With thoſe ſame tints we two admired that day!
My laſt year's love, haſt thou forgotten it?

IV.

And thou—ah, wherefore art thou ſtill ſo fair?
Why are thy ſmiles ſtill juſt ſo what they were,
  Save that for me they ſpeak not any love?
Why haſt thou ſtill that ſame bright golden hair,
  Now I have no ſhare in the praiſe thereof?

V.

I may not call you now what I did then.
Your lips and ſmiles are cold and alien.
  Thoſe times and theſe—how like! how wide apart!
I have loſt what I ſhall never learn again.
  I have forgotten the by-ways of your heart.

An. æt. 18.

ON LAKE COMO.

ON LAKE COMO.

THE ſtars are o'er our heads in hollow ſkies,
In hollow ſkies the ſtars beneath our boat.
Betwixt the ſtars of two infinities,
Midway upon a gleaming film, we float.
My lips are on the ſounding horn;
The ſounding horn with muſic fills.
Faint echoes backwards from the world are borne,
Tongued by yon duſky zone of ſlumbering hills.
The world ſpreads wide on every ſide,
But dark and cold it ſeems to me.
What care I, on this charmèd tide,
For aught ſave thoſe far ſtars and thee?

An. æt. 17.

IN THE CELL.

'Even in this ſolitary life the Saint underwent many temptations and aſſaults of the Evil One; and he relates that on one occaſion the recollection of a beautiful woman, whom he had ſeen at Rome, took ſuch poſſeſſion of his imagination, that he was on the point of quitting his retirement and betaking himſelf to her company.'

'Oh tortuoſas vias! Væ animæ audaci quæ ſperavit, ſi a te receſſiſſet, ſe aliquid melius habituram!'

S. Aug. *Conf.* lib. vi. 26.

IN THE CELL.

I.

I MUST have knelt here long, the black-wick'd light
Flares now ſo groſſly. In mine ears the night
Is dumb as at its ſeaſon loneliеſt.
What do I here? Hardly I know aright;
But I muſt kneel ſtill, for I dare not reſt.

II.

Kneel in my wretchedneſs—leagues, leagues away
From all the hours and faces of the day.
How faint and far they ſeem! They little gueſs
With what ſtrange twain alone I ſtrive—not they—
Here in my mid ſoul's ghoſtlieſt wilderneſs—

III.

My ſin, and Chriſt. He, worn with many a wound,
Here pleads. His voice—ah, hark to that ſad ſound
I dare not, but I feel it all the ſame.
And there, not pleads, but ſcorns, with gold hair crowned,
She whoſe mere ſcorn but fans and feeds my flame.

IV.

Chriſt and my ſin and I, a dream-like three!
Some dreadful thing, it ſeems, has come to me,
More dreadful than I wot of. When 'tis day,
I ſhall but give a little ſtart to ſee
All my face changed—my hair grown ſudden grey.

V.

I know not why, to-night, but all things ſeem
Like feveriſh ſhapes of ſome deſpairing dream.
How ſtrangely ghaſtlier and more woe-begone
Stares in the lamplight's waver of gloom and gleam
This haggard Chriſt in carven marble wan!

VI.

Strangely the little ſhadows ſhake and crawl
On the rough ſtone-work of this nude dim wall,
And pale ſtone ſemblance of God's thorny crown.
How ſtrange theſe ſeem—my ſin, and I, and all!
Oh, what a dull weight loads mine eyelids down!

VII.

Eyelids and eyes ache! My brain reels; my knees
May have been bended thus for centuries,
It almoſt ſeems, here on this bare ſtone floor.
I have been changed, I think, by ſome diſeaſe,
And am become a nightmare—man no more.

VIII.

Into mine ears the ſilence creeps and clings,
Groteſque with hoſts of quaint, vague whiſperings.
  Oh for ſome common living thing, to break
This ſilent, long monotony of things,
  And ſhow me truly if I ſleep or wake!

IX.

Perhaps 'twill ſoon be day. I do not know.
I cannot tell if time move ſwift or ſlow.
  Hours may be moments, moments may be hours.
Would I could lighten a little this load of woe,
  Ere through the broken Eaſt the dull dawn lowers.

X.

Dawn! ay, and day! Alas! my part in day,
It ſeems, is gone from me—quite paſt away,
  Like young life's guileleſſneſs and love and truſt.
Day will at leaſt come back as diſmally
  As ghoſts of theſe, if come at length it muſt.

XI.

Oh, Lord, have pity on all this barren pain!
Lo, how two wills have ſtriven, until the twain,
  Each ſickly-tired, each unvictorious,
Have grown, like ſtreams drunk by a ſandy plain,
  Loſt in blank waſtes of woe monotonous:

XII.

Whilſt wearineſs completes my miſery.
My head feels heavy, aching giddily:
The flaring lamp, too, reels for wearineſs,
Impure and tired and dizzy, even as I,
Whoſe whole good part has waned to one diſtreſs.

XIII.

Wearily flaring—ay!—Why, that's the flit—
Yes—of a gnat's wings, ſnared and ſinged in it.
The lamp's alive at leaſt. Lo, once again
I feel ſome quick priſm of the ſpirit ſplit
Into live parts this formleſs ſenſe of pain.

XIV.

Again my love confronts me. Again I know
I cannot, cannot leave it—not although
There's bitter leaven in this forbidden bread.
God, let that taſte abide. 'Tis better ſo;
For whilſt that laſts I am not wholly dead.

XV.

But yet I cannot pray. No tear will fall
Out of my ſoul's dry eyes. Aloud I call—
My voice—but my heart fails me evermore.
Would I could ſin my ſin out once for all,
Not let the longing rot me to the core!

XVI.

Oh, ſterile ſtrife! Oh, hateful bended knees!
Oh, mockery of bittereſt mockeries!
I cannot pray. I totter towards deſpair.
Theſe be no prayers, mere ſighs and groans like theſe,
Though phantom-ſhaped deceitfully like prayer.

XVII.

What ſhall I do? Riſe from my knees again?
Thus with my very body why remain
Lying, O Thou far patient God, to Thee?
Am I indeed ſo very wicked, then?
And is Chriſt's work made wholly vain in me?

XVIII.

For what hope's left? I ſtruggle in vain to pray.
Ev'n mid my groans my ſoul ſtill ſteals away
Back to the haunting hair, and proud ſoft eyes—
The ſoul forbidding what the ſad lips ſay—
Mere words—mere hollow huſk of prayer-like lies.

XIX.

In vain I ſtart and ſtruggle. In vain I try
To think on that kind Chriſt I crucify.
The ſad face fades, and from the dim eclipſe
Her eyes and hair ſhine forth luxurioufly,
With curved contempt upon her liſtleſs lips.

XX.

Oh, ſad love, heavy upon me like deſpair!
Oh, large dark eyes that haunt me everywhere
With eloquent wealth of lids! Pale, perfect face,
Crowned with the ſtrange ſurpriſe of golden hair,
Leave me—oh, leave me for a little ſpace!

XXI.

Wouldſt thou but one ſhort moment tarry away,
Then might I ſeize the time, and cry, and ſay,
'Cleanſe me, O Lord, and make my ſick heart whole.'
One prayer might ſave me; but I cannot pray,
Save groaning, 'Pity, O Lord, this prayerleſs ſoul!'

XXII.

Alas! for all my ſtrugglings I ſhall die;
No prayer will come for all my agony;
Vain is the ſtrength of all my travailings.
A ſnared bird vainly beats its wings to fly,
How hard ſoe'er it ſtrive, the gin's tooth clings.

XXIII.

What, then, are prayers? I think no prayer could be
Wrung out of a man's heart more bitterly.
One after one I feel them ſtart and roll—
Theſe blood-drops of my ſoul's Gethſemane;
My groans, the bloody ſweat-drops of my ſoul.

XXIV.

And all in vain, it ſeems—in vain, in vain!
I ſcarce know what I ſay, for dizzy pain
  Blurs all in one confuſion. Everything
Reels in the ſick delirium of my brain—
  Yea, Chriſt reels too; yet ſtill to Him I cling,

XXV.

And ſin to me. Both cling—I know not how;
All ſwims in this hard aching of my brow:
  And now night's come, and none may work therein.
Curſe, curſe my weakneſs! Sleep is on me now.
  Mine eyes ache. I muſt ſlumber with my ſin.

XXVI.

Mine eyelids can no longer hold apart;
The giddy lamplight ſeems to dance and dart,
  And ſickens me. Mine eyeballs—how they ache!
Pity, O Chriſt, mine unrepentant heart,
  For, come what will, I can no longer wake.

XXVII.

Yet, ſinking in this bitter lethargy,
'God, God!' I call, even as ſome drowner's cry,
  As his ſtrength fails, who knows not what he ſaith,
But thinks he ſhrieks—'Haſte, help me, or I die!'
  Chriſt help me! Sleep—and is this alſo death?

An. æt. 19.

SONG.

Ἠλιβάτοις ὑπὸ κευθμῶσι γενοίμαν,
ἵνα με πτεροῦσαν ὄρνιν
θεὸς ἐν πταναῖς ἀγέλαισιν θειή
ἀρθείην δ' ἐπὶ πόντιον
κῦμα τᾶς Ἀδριηνᾶς
ἀκτᾶς Ἠριδανοῦ θ' ὕδωρ.

EURIP. *Hip.* 727–752.

SONG.

WOULD God I were now by the ſea,
By the winding, wet, worn caves,
By the ragged rifts of the rocks;
And that there as a bird I might be
White-winged with the ſea-ſkimming flocks,
Where the ſpray and the breeze breathe free
O'er the ceaſeleſs mirth of the waves,
And diſhevel their looſe grey locks.
I would ſpread my wings on the moiſt ſalt air,
And my wide white wings ſhould carry me,
Lifted up, out over the ſea,
Carry, I heed not where—
Somewhither far away;
Somewhither far from my hateful home,
Where the breaſt of the breeze is ſprinkled with ſpray,
Where the reſtleſs deep is maddened with glee,
Over the waves' wild ecſtaſy,
Through the free blown foam.

An. æt. 18.

A MAY IDYL.

A MAY IDYL.

I.

WOULD I might lean and dream here evermore,
Thus by green ſhadow of hazels murmured o'er,
Nor ever wander away, clear pool, from thee,
Through whoſe pure wave thine amber-flickering floor
Swims ever upwards, wavering languidly!

II.

For May is ruddy and gold amongſt the trees,
All round the little valley's ſides of peace,
Where no man's voice, nor any voice, makes ſtir,
Save ſometimes o'er the leafy lonelineſs
The long, looſe laugh of the wild woodpecker.

III.

Yes, here, clear pool, deliciouſly alone,
Here let me muſe and dream, and make mine own
All of thy beauty, and every change of thine—
The tremulous ſhades that cling to every ſtone,
And all thoſe tawny ſtones that ſhake and ſhine:

IV.

Or elſe, what new ſweet charm they bring for thee,
Theſe breaths, whereof the hazels liſp to me,
  Wildering thy floors with glimmerings manifold;
Or melting into one rich myſtery
  The enamelled ſoftneſs of their brown and gold:

V.

And then, again, the breezy ſhudder allayed,
And thoſe ſlow coiling lights that float and fade
  Down through the clear mid-water, until once more
The little tangled tremor of woven ſhade
  Spreads its live tiſſue o'er the pebbly floor.

VI.

Yes, here, loved pool, here let me dream! for here,
Through mine own heart's moſt tranquil lake-water,
  Lights alſo from afar, ſend other gleams:
Dreams of that diſtant other love draw near,
  That ſeems ſo ſweet, and only ſweet in dreams!

VII.

Again—ah, ſlothful-ſweet!—it ſeems I ſee
Beauty which once I knew full bitterly:
  Fair faces, long forgotten, riſe again.
I ſee them ſmile, and frown and ſmile, at me;
  And ſigh for all their falſeneſs, with no pain.

VIII.

Then, lifting lids, I catch thy mirrorings
Of leaf and ſky, of green and glancing things,
  Which oft thy wayward pebbles waver through.
Oh, how like theſe are my imaginings
  One tendereſt interlude of falſe and true!

An. æt. 18.

TO B. W.

ON HER BIRTHDAY, JUNE 21ſt.

To B. W.

On her Birthday, June 21st.

CHILD of the whole year's flowerieſt time,
  Siſter to all the ſunnieſt hours,
Daughter of June, whoſe each year's chime
  Is rung by choirs of birds and flowers;
The Summer's queen of the days is near,
  Like a roſe the Summer opens and ſwells.
Liſten a moment! Pauſe and hear
How the richeſt roſes of all the year
  Once more are ringing thy birthday bells.
Soft be my words. Thou haſt others near
With words and wiſhes and gifts more dear;
And as for me, may'ſt thou only hear
  My words as a whiſper borne by the breeze
  From dwelling to dwelling acroſs the trees —
A half-articulate voice that ſays,
Though the roſe-ſcent dies and the roſe decays,
  The roſe of the ſpirit never is ſere.
Soft as roſes be all thy ways,
And thou, may'ſt thou through all thy days
Open and greaten even as theſe,
  Petal by petal, and year by year.

Torquay, an. æt. 19.

TO MDLLE. A. DE B.

WRITTEN ON A CHRISTMAS CARD.

TO MDLLE. A. DE B.

I.

WHAT ſhall the humble verſe expreſs
I dare to-day to breathe to thee?
Levity, or tenderneſs?
It's all the ſame to me.

II.

Shall I ſay your charming dreſſes
Have a ſubtler charm than faſhion?
Shall I ſay your glance expreſſes
Something more than paſſion?

III.

Shall I tell you that your face is
Something more than pretty?
Shall I call your wayward phraſes
Something more than witty?

IV.

Shall I tell you that you bring
A joy where'er you enter,
That's warm as ſummer, freſh as ſpring,
And ſtops as long as winter?

V.

No—I'll ſay no word of this:
It's all ſo plain, although ſo true.
I'll only wiſh you half the bliſs
We all receive from you.

Chriſtmas, 1879.

TO A FRIEND.

TO A FRIEND.

OF all the many memories we have ſown,
We two together, and ſeen ariſe in flowers,
Whoſe roots go deep into the paſt ſweet hours,
Which one, when all the reſt are overblown,
Shall we ſtill water and tend with conſtant care?
Ah, fellow-watcher many a long night through,
For me, I were moſt fain to think of you
Pale as ſo many a dawn with me you were,
Juſt when the night turned chill, and the grey air
Found all things fallen on ſleep, and wet with dew;
And on your ſoul the ſolemn paſt hours weighed,
Thoſe marvellous hours through which you had waked with me,
Watching the tender moonlight and ſoft ſhade,
Like wavering love-thoughts which vague doubts invade,
Irreſolute on the ſweet breaſt of the ſea,

All the night long; until we turned to mark,
  Over long lines of dim hills far away,
The ſlow grey grow into the Eaſtern dark,
  And the ſlow ſaffron grow into the grey.
Leave Chance to garden all meaner memories!
  Let hope and triumph, let defeat and care,
  Let outworn loves, dimmed eyes and faded hair,
Rouſe if they will remorſe, or ſmiles or ſighs;
  So that we ſtill may ponder how all of theſe
  Shrank back abaſhed before thoſe moonlit ſeas,
And the grey calm of thoſe far-dawning ſkies!

Torquay, an. æt. 19.

BRUSSELS AND OXFORD.

BRUSSELS AND OXFORD.

I.

HOW firſt we met do you ſtill remember?
Do you ſtill remember our laſt adieu?
You were all to me, that ſweet September:
Oh, what, I wonder, was I to you?

II.

But I will not aſk. I will leave in haze
My thoughts of you, and your thoughts of me;
And will reſt content that thoſe ſweet fleet days
Are ſtill my tendereſt memory.

III.

I often dream how we went together
Mid glimmering leaves and glittering lights,
And watched the twilight Belgian weather
Dying into the ſtarrieſt nights:

IV.

And over our heads the throbbing million
Of bright fires beat, like my heart, on high;
And the muſic claſhed from the lit pavilion,
And we were together, you and I.

V.

But a hollow memory now ſuffices
For what, laſt ſummer, was real and true;
Since here am I by the miſty Iſis,
And under the fogs of London you.

VI.

But what if you, like a ſwift magician,
Were to change the failing, flowerleſs year—
Were to make that true that is now a viſion,
And bring back Summer and Bruſſels here?

VII.

For Fanny, I know, that if you come hither
You *will* bring with you the time of flowers,
And a breath of the tender Belgian weather,
To Oxford's grey autumnal towers.

VIII.

And in froſt and fog though the late year dies,
Yet the hours again will be warm and fair,
If they melt once more in your dark, deep eyes,
And are meſhed again in your golden hair.

Oxford, an. æt. 23.

NATURA VERTICORDIA.

Sed ubi oris aurei Sol radiantibus oculis
Luſtravit aethera album, ſola dura, mare ferum,
Pepulitque noctis umbras vegetis ſonipedibus.
Ita de quiete molli, rabidâ ſine rabie,
Simul ipſa pectore Atys ſua facta recoluit,
Liquidâque mente vidit ſine quîs ubique foret,
Animo æſtuante rurſum reditum ad vada tetulit :
Ibi maria vaſta viſens lacrymantibus oculis
Patriam allocuta mœſta eſt ita voce miſeriter.

CATULLUS.

NATURA VERTICORDIA.

I.

AH, on that morning how I curſed the light!
Let it be nameleſs—all the ſhameleſs night,
The ſpent fleet pleaſure, fanged by hound-ſwift pain.
The pitileſs morning ſmote mine aching ſight,
And would not let me hide in ſleep again.

II.

No ſpongy Eaſt—no ſlough of ſoiled grey ſky:
I could have borne that well. But ſplendidly,
Pitileſſly pure, and pitileſſly fair,
I knew the Eöan roſe-light—ſordid I,
Unclean in all that waſh of radiant air.

III.

The day-ſpring cruſhed me with its voiceleſs ſcorn,
Burning towards God, nor heeding me forlorn,
Dumb and caſt out from all that infinite choir—
That Titan praiſe—the pæan of the morn,
Scaling God's throne with a thunder of colour and fire.

IV.

Ah, there outſide, the ſplendour and the blaze!
The ſoft ſun, crimſoning through an amber haze,
  Was fluſhing all the far fair orient ſea.
And I ſhrank, and cried, 'My right is gone to gaze,
  Alas, with theſe polluted eyes, on thee!

V.

'Guiltily now I tremble as I behold
That beauty which I yearned ſo for of old,
  Cringe now with ſhame in the old clear love's ſtead—
Cower from yon glory of molten miſty gold,
  Sublimed in fervent fumes of roſe and red.

VI.

'Then is the colour huſhed a ſpace; and higher,
Splinters and glittering flakes of ſcarlet fire
  In waſtes of cleareſt ſaffron, pale and rare;
And over all, in many a crown-like gyre,
  Pink fleeces floating faint in purple air.

VII.

'Oh, love eſtranged! oh, ſweet, loſt paradiſe
Of light and colour! To my ſhame-ſhrunk eyes,
  Thoſe great pure things—how alien now they are!
How do they ſcorn me, theſe intenſe blue ſkies,
  And clear white chaſteneſs of the morning ſtar!

VIII.

'How am I fallen and changed ſince yeſterday,
When yonder ſun was clouded ſoft and grey,
From this ſame place I watched with ſilent ſight
The ſhifting ſunlights on the ſhadowy bay,
And faint horizons flaſh with lengths of light;

IX.

'And felt my heart, ſo ſtanding here alone,
Throb, and my whole ſoul on a ſudden grown
Yearning and glad and wild and ſad in me,
For love of thoſe far happy clouds that ſhone,
Grey fleeced with ſilver, o'er the ſilver ſea.

X.

'Then ghoſts of unknown longings ſwelled my breaſt,
Meaſureleſs love and infinite unreſt,
A reaching after ſome withdrawn Delight,
I knew was ſomewhere, lured me to the queſt,
Loſt parent of an orphan appetite—

XI.

'Of a longing that lay ever in wait for me,
To ſweep me far, far off, aërially,
Out of myſelf, away from all mean things,
Strong as the ſea-bound wind, whereon to ſea
Is ſwept the ſea-mew's ſweet white width of wings.

XII.

'Vague, vaſt, at ſundry times 'twould drift me—yea,
The vaſter for its vagueneſs—far away,
I wiſt not whitherward, in the ſtream thereof;
Tinged with the many moods of night and day,
Changeful of ſhape, yet ſtill one changeleſs love.

XIII.

'Oh, how it filled me, lured me, evermore!
Now in the intricate foreſt's foliaged core—
Green ravelled lights, and rich-barked boughs of trees:
Now in the noon's bright foam-flaſh ſhowered to ſhore,
And blue, ſoft diſtances of ſunlit ſeas:

XIV.

'Now in fierce night-falls o'er the deſolate main,
When death was in the weird waves' mad refrain,
And the lightning ſhook its wild hair on the ſweep
Of the great free foam-fraught ſea-going hurricane,
Over the hoary darkneſs of the deep.

XV.

'And now, when ſkies were faint and ſtars were few,
'Twould thrill me, ſhaped like ſadneſs, through and through—
Times when the low winds liſped their tendereſt tune;
Dim ſorrow-flaking ſeaſons of ſoft dew,
And lulled ſeas ſilvering ſlowly to the moon.

XVI.

'Yes, everywhere I felt, at every hour,
Through my ſoul's lulls or tumults, one ſame Power
Drawing my whole ſelf open by degrees;
My love ſeemed greetening towards that perfect flower
Whereof the ſtrange witch ſang to Socrates.

XVII.

'Then theſe things made me noble. Then they teemed
For me with voices. Voices, or I dreamed,
Lured me at all times and on every ſide,
Wordleſſly crying, "Come! come!" and they ſeemed
The voices of the Spirit and the Bride.

XVIII.

'But now—ah, fallen, fallen!—I do not dare
To raiſe myſelf and hearken. Alas! I bear
A great weight, heavier than a millſtone is—
Bitterer than any terrible proud deſpair—
Self's ſcorn of ſelf, God's bittereſt Nemeſis.

XIX.

'For now this ſun-ſtream of clear roſy light
Serves but to ſhow me vile in mine own ſight,
All my ſoul's raiment ſpotted ſtill with mire,
Marred by the ghaſtly havoc of the night,
And conquering ravage of a ſcorned deſire.

XX.

'And now the old voices all in vain for me
Will ſound; for now no proud antiphone
Dares, as of old, to anſwer from my ſoul.
How will it ceaſe, the evangel of the ſea!
How will the dawn unfold, a vain blank ſcroll!

XXI.

'Maimed, crawling wretch! Nay, I ſhall riſe no more.
Poor falſe-fledged Icarus, wingleſs as before;
Maimed by the fall! To its old mortality
This mortal cleaves. What right had I to ſoar?
Of the earth earthy—ay, the earth for me!

XXII.

'Oh, how my tenſe brow aches with dull, thick care!'
Then I threw wide the window, and laid bare
My face, to realiſe that hour of hours.
Ah, what a guſt of freſhneſs!—morning air
With rainy ſcents of earth, and whiffs of flowers!

XXIII.

And there the birds were, ſinging; and far and ſweet
Came the criſp ſhore-ſong of the ebb's retreat;
And I ſighed and cried as I looked towards the ſea,
'How muſt thy ſands now ſwim one ſhining ſheet,
With orange ſunlight, and the breeze breathe free!

XXIV.

'And all the woods be fed with moiſt perfumes
Of new-blown flowers feſtooning green wet glooms,
Which yet the level dawn-fluſh filters through;
And denſe drenched evergreens droop their pendulous plumes,
Grey with the diamond ſparkle of all the dew!

XXV.

'But I ——' And yet I ſtill ſtood gazing there,
Heavy with ſorrow in my ſtupid ſtare;
As might ſome proud queen's ſcorned, unlooked-at lover,
Who, thinking ſo to cheat entire deſpair,
Keeps gazing ſtill, though all his hopes are over.

XXVI.

And thus—I know not how—a ſtealthy Peace,
Swathed in dim weeds like Grief's, by ſoft degrees,
To me, who knew her not, drew gently near;
Till my lids ſmarted with a coming eaſe,
And the dawn-light glimmered dim through a ſhaken tear.

XXVII.

And I felt my ſhame's dull ice was molten through,
And hung there flickering, globed in hopeful dew:
And once again a ſad, compaſſionate cry,
Came in the holy wordleſs voice I knew,—
'Infirm of love, why haſt thou left us? Why?

XXVIII.

'What haſt thou found more pure, more great, more fair,
Maddened for whoſe ſweet ſake thou thus couldſt dare
To blind thine eyes to us, and laugh to ſcorn
The flower-ſweet fellowſhip of the early air,
And far-fluſhed outgoings of the even and morn?

XXIX.

'What is it?—what, thus worthier far than we?
Art thou content, and ſhall thy bartering be?
The Holy Spirit of dawn, with its tongues of flame,
The proud ſong of the ſunriſe and the ſea,
Sold for thoſe red lips, and their babble of ſhame?

XXX.

'What haſt thou found more than the love we gave?
What ſympathy more ſtrong to ſuccour and ſave?
Haſt not thou known a deeper comfort lies
In the deep language of the wind and wave
Than in any human words, or ſilent eyes?

XXXI.

'Do not man's friendſhips fail, and fade, and fall;
And priſoned love turn weary, and weak, and pall;
Luſt humble, and blind, and blaſt, and then grow cold?
But we change not, we overlive them all—
All luſts and loves, all young deſires or old.

XXXII.

'Launch then on us thy unanchored life, for we
Sweep ever, ever on to the unknown ſea,
In a river of muſic. Hear our call—be wiſe!
On ſweep the floods! Say, ſhall they carry thee
On their broad breaſt of boundleſs harmonies?

XXXIII.

'Lo, there is no deſire ſo wild of wing,
No ſtrange pure nomad paſſion paſturing
By nameleſs wells and remote graſs alone,
But ſtrike our harp, and thou ſhalt find ſome ſtring
With theſe to quiver and yearn in uniſon.

XXXIV.

'Come now, and prove us if our words be true!
Riſe, roam the fragrant deep green places through,
Where the new goſpels of the wild-flowers tell
How dew-awakened ſcents and virgin dew
Make a whole heaven in every bending bell.

XXXV.

'Or where the wave's voice ſparkles in the ſun
With cold, pure foam—there make the done undone;
There ſpurn the paſt! for lo, our lovers muſt
Draw near as in no humbled veſture ſpun
Of love's threads tangled in the loom of luſt.

XXXVI.

'Riſe o'er thy paſt, and burn its routed night
Into gold fumes, and clouds of crimſon light,
Sunlike!' —— And as I gazed, more ſplendidly
Glowed, as it ſeemed, the dawn-fluſh, and more bright
Rippled the rough freſh roſe-light on the ſea.

XXXVII.

And from mine eaſtward lips broke forth a cry,
'Ah, that my fleſh were but a cloud, to die
Into the infinite joy that hath no name,
As dies yon roſe-miſt into the blue, pure ſky—
Yon almoſt fluttering film of rare roſe flame!

XXXVIII.

'Haſte—let me forth, and wander by the ſeas,
Or through green places, damp with flowers and trees,
And waſh old ſtains off—cleanſe my ſoul anew!
Yea, ſurely find a ſacrament in theſe,
A ſecond baptiſm in the morning dew.'

An. æt. 19.

ÆNEAS TO DIDO.

ÆNEAS TO DIDO.

I.

I LEAVE thee, but I love thee none the leſs,
And this my love, ſelf-wounded, ſmarts and ſtings.
Hail, Sorrow! like a goad thy bitterneſs
Shall drive me to great things.

II.

For Love's ſweet wine has lulled me overlong,
Looſening my ſoul—woe's me! But now at length
Let it be mixed and made with ſcorn and wrong,
A bitter draught of ſtrength.

III.

I am athirſt for ſuch, having known of old
Greatneſs is ſuckled at the breaſts of Pain.
But muſt—ah! muſt the ſword of burning cold
Go through the hearts of twain?

IV.

Hark! the winds call me—'Lover, love, fly!
We to thy true home will companion thee—
Divine untold-of realms, whereto the ſky
Stoops down behind the ſea.

V.

'Shake looſe thy ſails, and leave the land's delight,
And we will ſweep thee outward to thine home.
Drive through the wild green billows, and the white
Wild-driven ſmoke of foam!'

VI.

Ev'n as the pale hag's muffled muttering
Draws down the moon from heaven, the ſpell of Fate
Draws me from thee. Our bonds in burſting ſtring,
And all are violate!

VII.

I am doomed, and called, and deſtined. Mine, mine own
Deſtiny calls; nor needs to call again.
Though late, I come; and may my pain atone
For ſweet days ſpent in vain!

VIII.

Oh, love, I ſeal our ſevering with this kiſs.
Thy lips were warm when thus I firſt waxed bold;
Not dew-damp, bloodleſs, miſerable like this.
Oh, love, thy lips are cold!

IX.

Farewell, thou ſweet child of my great foe's wrath!
Farewell, O pleading, beautiful ſad face!
Thou waſt the golden fruitage in my path,
Dropt to make vain my race.

X.

I may not heed mine agony nor thine,
O loved one, over-fair, and over-true!
Hail, painful Glory, making Pain divine!
Adieu, ſweet love, adieu!

An. æt. 17.

FROM AN UNFINISHED DRAMA,

CALLED

ÆNEAS AND DIDO.

FROM AN UNFINISHED DRAMA,

CALLED

ÆNEAS AND DIDO.

Scene: A Terrace overlooking the Sea, before Dido's Palace at Carthage. Moonlight.

MERCURY.

FAR cradled in the ſacred ſecret weſt
My dwelling lies, from every taint of ill
Baſtioned, and belted round inviolably,
By azure oceans glaſſed in boundleſs calm,
O'er whoſe clear face not ever mortal keel
Paſſes to blur the blue tranſparency.
There is no cold nor froſt, nor any care,
Nor any tread of ſinward-haſtening feet
Pollutes the ſoil; but the pure opulent Earth
Pours forth her wealth for thoſe that ever are,
And gods behold their father face to face.
And there ſome ſouls—ſo fate decrees—of men,

Some—very few—may hard admittance win,
Purged and made holy by the luſtral wave
Of the ſoul's blood, ſpilt in the war with fleſh,
And over fleſh victorious. But from this
Hard fight moſt ſhrink—moſt even of theſe elect,
Deadened by the groſs ſenſes, and no leſs
By thoſe great foes to calmneſs, love and hate,
Not bridled in. But that ſuch ſad defeat
Befall not now my ſtrenuous care muſt be;
For I am Maïa's ſon, the wanderer god,
The pinion-footed, golden-wanded god,
Whom with a matter of no mean import
Freighted the ſire now ſends; and here I ſtand
Before this palace, ſeeking ſpeech of one—
One of the holy elect, who, led aſtray
By too-encroaching love, without high aid
Muſt miſs for ever the ſteep road to fame.
And, therefore, hither am I ſent of Jove,
To unglue the eyelids of his ſleeping ſoul,
Stuck with ſuch fatal rheum. Ha!—this is he!
But not alone—his beautiful curſe is with him;
Dear curſe, more deadly in that ſhe is dear.
They come to hear the voices of the night;
They come to look into each other's eyes,
And tie freſh vows about them. Ha, dark Queen!

Thou little know'ſt one burning word of mine
Can ſmoulder up that hemp of lovers' knots;
But thou ſhalt ſoon be taught. I'll wait awhile,
And view thee viewleſs, till more fitting time.

Enter ÆNEAS *and* DIDO.

Æneas. Oh, light and ſilence of the ſummer night,
How thy voice fills me, though the words are loſt—
All loſt ſave one, which, ever like a miſt
Seen flung above ſome unſeen waterfall,
Riſes. That word is love. O queen! mine own,
Look in my eyes. There was a hungry ſeaſon,
When, inarticulate as a wave that creeps
With its white lips into a whiſpering ſhell,
My ſoul received theſe voices, knowing not
What is to love; but through the famiſhing days
A hunger haunted me, without the knowledge
To ſeek for food; and, like a hunted ſtag,
Driven to the verge of ſome ſheer precipice,
And wild to ſpring ſomewhither, from my lips
My ſpirit hung; till love, revealed through thee,
Came beyond hope, as breaks the ſudden moon
On one who, wandering blindly round his home,
Seems to himſelf far ſtrayed into ſtrange ways.
My Dido, ſpeak.

Dido. O Trojan, cleave to me!
None can love more than I; moſt will love leſs.
Oh, uſe me not as thy ſoul's ſtepping-ſtone,
Climbing, as ſome men climb, to loftier calm!
Tread not my poor neck down in death to riſe,
If riſe thou canſt.

Æneas. Reſt, for I cannot riſe.

Dido. I truſt thee. Yet—deep in my heart there lurks
Some cold diſquiet. Warm me with thy words,
And tell me of the growing of thy love.

* * * *

Scene, the ſame. Time, towards morning. A ſtorm riſing. MERCURY *meanwhile has been troubling the mind of* ÆNEAS *with thoughts of Italy, and his deſtined work there.*

Dido. Will not you look on me? Ah, what means this—
Your pale, changed face? And why ſo wiſtfully
Goes ever to the ſeaward your wan gaze?
What ſtrange thoughts ſtir you now?

Æneas. My memories
Riſe like a ſtorm and ſtir me. In mine ears
Harſh ſhrieks and hollow rumour of armour and arms
Sound like a dream, and windy manes and plumes

Of horſes and of heroes waver and toſs
Dreamlike and dim; and all the plains of Troy
Move once again with clouds of battle-duſt
That meet like thunder-clouds, and through the dark
I see the javelins lighten, and I hear
The round ſhields boom like timbrels, mid the ſhouts
Of fighting men and falling. Hark! the wind
Riſes, and wheeling voices of the air
Sing in our ears, and ever ſweep to ſea—
The ſea where no land is, nor any home
But ſtorm, and calm, and freedom. Storm—ay, ſtorm!
I feel it, it will come, it is in my hair—
The ſweet, wild, infant ſtorm. Ah me, my love,
Do not you feel the wild wind in your hair?
What! Are my words wild, too? What is it I ſay?
What have my memories to do with ſtorm?
Ah, I have ſeen—— Have I not made my neſt,
As the white, wandering, homeleſs ſea-bird does,
On the ſtorms and wide free places of man's life—
Battle, and wreck, and ruin? Have I not been
Nurſling of many ſtorms? Ah, me! that night
Wherein my eyes were opened, and I ſaw,
Staring aghaſt, where all the towers of Troy
Loomed high like dreams above the fiery clouds—
Suddenly ſaw how all the quivering haze

Was full of ſtalking Preſences, that went
Tall as the towers, and breaſting drifts of flame—
The cloudy immortal forms of ruining gods!
And there, far off, remote from all the reſt,
Prankt on the topmoſt crag of maſonry,
Was one—a lonely terror in the night,
Shining, who held in hand a ſhield that ſhone,
And who a burning nimbus round her hair,
Wore like a meteor, and who looked with eyes
That did out-ſtare the furnace. My blood froze.
'Twas Pallas' ſelf. I knew her. This was ſhe.
I knew the ſcaly arms of cyanos;
I knew the grey gleam of the owl-like eyes;
I knew the end was come; and down from heaven
I knew the night had fallen, a ſnare of doom;
And under it our god-built Pergamus—
One darkneſs ruddy with a thouſand fires.

* * * *

An. æt. 18, 19.

ARIADNE.

'Proſpicit, et magnis curarum fluctuat undis.'

CATULLUS.

ARIADNE.

I.

MOTIONLESS, like ſome maddening Bacchanal
Struck marble in mid frenzy, with the call
Caught on her ſundering lips, ſo ſeemed ſhe there,
Gazing; all marble, ſave the riſe and fall
Of the long troubled amber of her hair.

II.

No motion elſe; but ever far away
She gazed towards the ſky's low paler grey
The ſwoll'n ſeas heaved againſt, and evermore
Blew in her face white powdery drift of ſpray—
That live-treſſed ſtatue on the lonely ſhore.

III.

So round her there the ſtorm grew guſtier,
And hoar ſky ſtorm-birds round her, with no fear,
Wheeled wondering at this ſtrange unmoving thing,
And nearer to her feet, and yet more near,
The wide white wave-edges waſhed whiſpering.

IV.

But ſhe of nothing ſuch had any care,
None of her looſened tiar, and ſtraying hair
  Unſhepherded in the cold and froward gale—
Fell not from off her ſalt breaſt, pale and bare,
  The looſened crimſon raiment ſlowly fail.

V.

Sorrow had numbed each ſenſe; yea, Sorrow now
Had numbed itſelf; and ſhe, ſhe wiſt not how
  Nor why ſhe ſorrowed—only dreamily
Felt the blown foam-fleet chill on cheek and brow,
  Saw the great foam-creſts rearing far to ſea.

VI.

And like the ſea her ſoul was. There ſhe found
A better voice than any of thoſe faſt bound
  In her lips petrified, and grief-choked breaſt—
The unutterable deſpairing of the ſound
  Of the dull, drear, troubled ſea, that could not reſt.

VII.

Till it ſeemed deſpair changed ſhape, and grew delight,
Whenever the proxy-wail of the chafed waves white
  Took heart for a ſtronger guſt, and writhed on high
Wildlier, and the whole ſea-chorus infinite
  Sated her gluttonous grief with a vaſter cry.

VIII.

That ſaved her—eaſed the deadly ſpeechleſſneſs,
The famine of tears, brought the ſtrained breaſt ſome eaſe;
Ay, verily, there ſhe had found a comforter—
The unfathomable ſympathy of the ſeas,
The deſolate depths for fellow-ſorrower.

IX.

So ſhe endured; and all one hueleſs hue
The day went by. Little that day ſhe knew
Of time, till at length, ſouth on the lorn ſea-line,
A fluſh of ſtormy fire arouſed her view—
One long low jagg'd red ſtreak—the ſunſet ſign.

X.

Then—help. But had that ſtorm-day held its peace,
Strewn ſpangling gold-duſt over blue clear ſeas,
That foamed at edge in twinkling lily-flower,
She had ſurely died—day's hateful happineſs
Robbed of his prize the young god-paramour.

An. æt. 19.

A MARRIAGE PROSPECT.

(FROM AN UNFINISHED DRAMA.)

A MARRIAGE PROSPECT.

(FROM AN UNFINISHED DRAMA.)

WHY ſhould I heed their railings? What's a prude?
A devil's ſcarecrow in the fields of good.
Let them rail on. I think a wedding-day
Looks beſt, as mountains do, ſome miles away,
Or ſqualid fiſhing-ſmacks far out to ſea,
Seen lily-ſailed in ſunſhine and blue haze,
Where the delicious lights are all men chaſe,
And no man ever reaches. And ſo I'm free
Another ſix weeks—move in a rich half-light,
A tendereſt compromiſe of dark and bright,
A magic ſeaſon, in ſhort, when eyes that ſhine
And lips that whiſper with ſoft words, combine
The ſpice of wrong, the conſcience-eaſe of right,
And deepeſt ſighs come moſt luxurioufly.
Then too this twilight-time leads not to night

But ſunriſe—that at leaſt will gladden me,
The ſunriſe of my day of married life,
Ere bride and bridegroom fade to man and wife:
And I meanwhile, a ſhort time more, am free—
Or half free; wherefore let me love my fill
Of half-loves, ere I conſecrate my days,
In ſober, ſombre truth, for good and ill,
To the one worſhip of a withering face.

An. æt. 19.

AT MORNING.

AT MORNING.

I.

NEW from yon choirs of ſparklings far away,
Freſh with the South, and ſmelling of the ſea,
Oh, how this young breeze pours clean into me
The gladneſs of the childhood of the day!
The floating pearl-lights twinkle and dip and play
O'er all the ſoft ſmooth ſea-blue, faſt and free;
Whilſt the tide's influence makes deliciouſly
Muſic and laughter in the little bay,
With ripple of ſong, in ſhoreward, gliſtening quick,
Live glaſs o'er cleareſt ſands ſeen under it,
And there amongſt yon low rocks leaping ſweet
In coral-ſhapen bloſſom of tender ſpray,
Low-gurgling with looſe waſh of foam-muſic,
Drunk with the deep child-gladneſs of the day!

II.

Oh, morning joy! oh, freſh ſea-ſcented air!
Where is the broken joy thou canſt not heal,
Which thought and doubt have racked and torn piece-meal?
Ah, breeze, breathe on, breathe hither and ſlake my care!
The ſummer ſea's evangel with thee bear;
Into mine inmoſt ſpirit let it ſteal!
Yea, breeze, breathe on, breathe hither, and make me feel
All the ſea's ſummer in my lifted hair!
No thought is needed by thy felt delight
To mediate betwixt us. Oh, June air,
Thy certain rapture thrills me through and through—
A conquering joy that puts all doubt to flight.
Falſe let it be—if truth be anywhere,
This ſweet deluſion at the leaſt is true.

An. æt. 19.

LINES ON THE DEATH OF A PET DOG

BELONGING TO LADY DOROTHY NEVILL.

'Animula, vagula, blandula.'

LINES ON THE DEATH OF A PET DOG.

I.

WHERE are you now, little wandering
Life, that ſo faithfully dwelt with us,
Played with us, fed with us, felt with us,
Years we grew fonder and fonder in?

II.

You, who but yeſterday ſprang to us,
Are we for ever bereft of you?
And is this all that is left of you—
One little grave and a pang to us?

June 1878.

PYGMALION.

PYGMALION

TO HIS STATUE, BECOME HIS WIFE.

I.

IS this then ſo, and have I ſtriven in vain
To hide the change I ſuffer? And can you ſee
Everything is not all it uſed to be?
Yes, love, that paſt can come no more again.
Am I in pain, too? Good—you have read my pain,
Known it is very great. That comforts me.

II.

For now knowing this, I know your lips will ſpare
Reproaches, leave the world to blur my name.
Mark my face well. No fluſh of ſilly ſhame,
But pallor only, and calm of grief is there—
Grief—yes, in that we have one thing ſtill to ſhare,
We two; for you, you will love on the ſame.

III.

What do I mean? Ah, me! how tenderly
Your ſweet eyes aſk, which once to me could bring
Balm, by a look, for any grievous thing.
What is it? Well, 'tis beſt that I reply—
Falter forth all myſelf, or by-and-by
My life will yield thee a crueller truth-telling.

IV.

Yet will you underſtand? or will your heart
Conceive my phraſèd ſorrow, or ever tell
Truly to what a depth I am pitiable,
And how to thee hath fallen the better part?
Truly how far the happier one thou art,
Whoſe love is ſtill a living water-well?

V.

What ſhould I tell thee of ſome man who fain
Would love ſome woman, and find love's font run dry?
Ah, 'There's none ſuch,' it is on your lips to cry,
'That ever longed to love and longed in vain—
Nay, none ſo very wretched!' Pauſe again!
Pauſe and look near, look near! That man am I.

VI.

Yes—as ſome blind man ſtanding on the ſhore,
With the whole wet drift of the ocean-ſtorm blown free
On his mute lids, and hearing thunderily
All the hoarſe hollow length of breakers roar,
Feels one great longing whelm him for one more—
One wild ſight more of the old yearned-for ſea;

VII.

Even ſo I long, taking this one wild ſight,
Oh woman, of thee, for a love that is paſſed away—
That comes no more, as never on any day
To that dark auditor the ſeen delight
Of the fleets of free white waves, and foam-ſhowers white,
And dark coaſts dim with ſtormy clouds of ſpray.

VIII.

Do I wrong thee lightly? Nay: thou canſt divine
Too well the lines of anguiſh on my brow.
Thou muſt have anguiſh, too; but happier thou
Wilt ſtill have where to love, for whom to pine;
Whilſt I —— only to yearn to love is mine,
But my dead love revives not anyhow.

IX.

I have ſaid. But you, do you take me, ſaying thus?
Can you ever know how ſorrowful men's loves are?
How we can only hear Love's voice from far—
Only deſpaired-of eyes be dear to us—
Mute ivory, that can never be amorous—
Far fair gold ſtigma of ſome lonelieſt ſtar?

X.

The Love we follow is cruel— a myſtery;
Upon the horizon only doth he dwell.
And thou, thou art now no more inſcrutable,
Thou haſt given and opened all thine heart to me.
I thought to embrace; I ſtretched mine arms to thee;
And lo, I ſtand and ſtretch them in farewell.

XI.

Ah, one dear dream, wherein I had hoped to ſnare
The love I chaſe for ever! oh, ultimate
Reſt, as I dreamed thee! Lo, my love, my fate
Calls us of old far off—I know not where.
I follow. Adieu, ſweet eyes! love once was there
For me; but love has left them deſolate.

XII.

Tired pilgrim of a fugitive vague delight,
  Where ſhall I reſt? Alas! I fain would be
  Some far-out ſtar over the windy ſea,
Bathed by the wild ſpray-ſprinkled breath of night,
With the morn for lullaby, and the ſaffron light
  Of the far happy morn to cradle me.

An. æt. 20.

FRIENDLESS.

FRIENDLESS.

THEY—had they left me? Did they truſt that ſo
I ſhould be comfortleſs? Their hating eyes
Meant it, I know; and all their virtuous lips,
Tight with a ſnarling ſanctity of ſcorn,
Meant it, I know, that day. And I replied—
Looked on as ſome pollution—no one word;
Made no appeal to thoſe juſt arbiters,
Not any of whom had any ſoftening glance,
Even in the laſt. Only I roſe, and mute,
Condemned of all my friends, paſſed right away
Out of their doors, unpitied, all alone,
Into the homeleſs ſtorm. And lo, the ſtorm
Bellowed, and howled, and raved, and welcomed me,
And the blown deſolate drizzlings fell on me
Like friends; and, ſweeter than all kiſſes, ſhed
On brow and cheek chill miſt of briny rain,
Full of the ſea's breath; and my whole heart ſwelled,
Feeling the great blaſts tangled in my hair,
And ſtreaming on my brow; and through the roar,

With a blind craving I climbed, and made my way
Out to a neighbouring beetling, iron-bound coaſt,
Facing towards the bleak Septentrion.
And as I climbed, the thunder of the hid ſea
Broke on my ears, and high in air I ſaw
Grey vapour of flying foam going up like ſmoke
Over thoſe heights, not, ſave on days like theſe,
Ever acquainted with the leaſt blown ſpray.
Friends—had they left me? Oh, I went alone
Along the brink of thoſe ſheer precipices,
And felt the ſtorms my brethren, and had eaſe.
For all the ſea was dun, and muffled up
With yellow fog, and white with tufted foam;
And far below, againſt the pitileſs baſe,
Shattering amongſt black rocks, great bellowing waves
Daſhed their deſpairing heads, and groaning died.

An. æt. 19.

TOO LATE!

TOO LATE!

I.

WHAT, dead—quite dead? And can you hear no prayer
Already? Have you in ſo ſhort a ſpace
Gone ſo far from your old abiding-place?
And is this all you have left me, this—to bear
The ſtill accuſings of that dear marred face?

II.

How they make bitterer all my grief than gall!
Oh, loving eyes, for ever cloſed on me;
Worn face that look'ſt ſo unreproachfully!
Too late, too late, I would I could recall
Every unloving word I have ſaid to thee!

III.

Have I been blind, never to recogniſe
The wounds I made till now? Ah, now I know
My cruel work in all that dumb great woe!
I ſee how piteous look thy poor cloſed eyes,
And know that it is I have made them ſo.

IV.

Oh why, why did you love me all theſe years?
Why not grow cruel to me as I to you?
Had both been falſe, neither had had to rue
One thing, nor ſhed, as I do, hard vain tears.
Why have you taunted me by being ſo true?

V.

Why have you let the whole remorſe be mine?
Thy moſt ſad mouth, why did it never ſay
One counter-word of anger? Lovingly,
Why did you let each patient, painful line,
Deepen in moanleſs ſilence day by day?

VI.

Why will tears never come, till they muſt fail
Of eaſe and comfort, and can only ſear?
Why am I moaning now to a deaf ear—
Moaning, as if my words could ever avail
To make one deep-grooved pain-line ſhallower?

An. æt. 20.

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

'Behold, I ſtand at the door and knock.'

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

I.

OH, can it be that ſtill Thou art ſtanding there,
Outſide mine heart's door, in Thine old ſweet guiſe,
With the old words, 'Oh, open, and be wiſe!'
With patient knock and piteous pleading prayer?
Yet ſtill I hear Thee. But too ſad to bear,
My Lord, Thy voice hath grown—Thy yearning cries
Broken with love, whereto no love replies.
Yet hope—hope ſtill. I need not yet deſpair.
I will haſten and undo the door at laſt;
I am haſtening now for fear Thou elſe be gone.
Enter, my Chriſt! or ere the hour be paſt!
Ah, me! how duſty are the door-poſts grown!
Baffled again! Help, help me here alone—
The hinges and the lock are ruſted faſt.

II.

And I am dreamy and weak. I cannot tell
What ſlothful power hath hold on all my heart.
I would ſome thunder-bolt of thought would dart
Right in the midſt, and burſt the drowſy ſpell,
Sharp with fierce thunder and flame intolerable;
That this blind, curſed film were cloven apart;
That my dull eyes might open with a ſtart,
And ſting, brought face to naked face with hell!
Lord, I have no ſtrength left to come to Thee.
Oh would that me, thus weak in drunkard's wife,
Something might rouſe, ſharp as the chill ſurpriſe
Of interlunar freſh night winds, that be
Blown in ſome reveller's dizzy, aching eyes,
Wild from ſea-ſtars and windy waſtes of ſea!

An. æt. 19.

SONNET ON THE LAST VERSE OF THE BIBLE.

'If any man add unto theſe things, God ſhall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man ſhall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God ſhall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things that are written in this book. He which teſtifieth theſe things ſaith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even ſo, come, Lord Jeſus.'

SONNET

ON

THE LAST VERSE OF THE BIBLE.

LAST on the golden lyre; O laſt vibration!
Still are thy dread chords quivering fearfully!
Nor ſpent and ſilent ſhall the long ſound be,
Till, like a bridegroom, lo, with exultation,
Over the laſt, the faithleſs generation,
Another ſound goes out to welcome Thee,
Thy ſpouſe, the thunder long delaying; and ye
Be blended in one vaſt reverberation,
Thou and the trumpet, over land and ſea:
And the day dawns when ſcarce the righteous ſtands,
And the Great Judge, with hard avenging hands,
And infinite terror heralding His path,
Sheds the laſt curſe over ſins, and ſeas, and lands,
From the wine-cup of the fierceneſs of His wrath.

An. æt. 19.

PROTEUS.

A ſenſe ſublime
Of ſomething far more deeply interfuſed,
Whoſe dwelling is the light of ſetting ſuns.

Σοὶ καὶ ξυνείμι καὶ λόγοις σ' ἀμείβομαι,
Κλυών μὲν αὐδῆν, ὄμμα δ' οὐχ ὁρῶν τὸ σόν.
EUR. *Hipp.* 84.

PROTEUS.

I.

SOLE in blank boundleſs darkneſs, dimly bright,
The hornèd moon hangs o'er the viewleſs ſea,
Whoſe faint lips at my feet waſh fitfully
Up the black ſhingle in whiſperings of criſp light.
Lonely I ſtand, the midnight's eremite,
Whilſt my awed ſeaward gaze goes earneſtly
Into the darkneſs face to face with me—
The darkneſs where the ſea is, and the night.
And lo, I feel It coming again, again,
Up from the deeps as Proteus did of old.
Ah, wert thou like that old god of the main,
To whom we cry, 'Unveil!' for ever in vain,
Formleſs Deſire, which no eye may behold,
No hands of ours can weary, and no ſpell chain.

II.

Oh, boſom-friend! familiar Myſtery!
Oh, Lurer with veiled face! oh, Comforter!
One ſpirit of many forms, felt everywhere,
Who knows what manner of Spirit thou mayſt be?
None, though his moſt loved haunts are full of thee—
Valleys where leaves and clear ſtreams ſleep and ſtir,
The blue flaſh of the diving kingfiſher—
The roſe whoſe depth of ſcent ſoft rains ſet free—
Though thy wild way be with the hurricane,
Thunder and cloud; though he behold the day
Cradling thee in ſome loneliеſt eaſtern fleece
Of crimſon fire; and ſadly ſighing again
His evening ſoul bewail thee, dying away
To unknown lands, and gold Heſperian ſeas.

III.

Lo, even now thou art very near to me,
But veiled, and far as ever from my prayer.
Still my ſoul feels thee, and ſtrange longings there
Start at thy voice, and cry in choirs towards thee.
In my mid ſoul what may this tumult be—
Longings I cannot rule, that do not dare
Whole days to ſtir within their ſecret lair,

But at thy call ſeek their wild Rhodopé?
  One to another in a ſtrange tongue calls:
I hearken, but can catch not what they ſay,
Only I hear their voices far away
  Swell to a paſſionate clamour at intervals.
Ah, who art thou, their god? For what boon pray
  Theſe, mine own inmoſt ſoul's vague Bacchanals?

IV.

What! wilt Thou never be revealed to us?
  Muſt our ſouls ſtill in blindneſs follow Thee,
  Nor, borne in ſwift raft over the deep ſea,
Ever ſleep even upon thy Dindymus?
Not ever build Thee up a pillared houſe,
  And ſerve Thee with articulate liturgy?
  Never before Thine altar bend our knee,
And twine rare flowers in garlands round Thy brows?
  No coſtlier offerings than theſe prefer—
Blind diſcontent, inſatiable unreſt,
And lonely love following an unknown queſt,
  Sad as man's love for woman, and tenderer?
Lo, theſe be all we offer—alas! our beſt:
  No certain gold and frankincenſe and myrrh!

v.

Do we then waver, and fear we are fools and blind?
Doubt we, and aſk we whither lead Thy ways?
Aſk, whither! Nay, *ſee* whence, pale, doubtful face!
Look back and ſee what things we have left behind—
Anger, and blinding luſts, and loves that bind,
And the mean voice that to any moment ſays
'Stay! thou art fair;' as with unflinching pace,
Veiled One, we follow Thee, and truſt to find
Hereafter, Thee unveiled, knowing and known,
Set with a rainbow round about Thy throne,
Soul of our life's unreſt! to find in Thee
The Thing we have long ſought ſorrowing here from far—
The Spirit of the bright and morning ſtar,
The ſunriſe, and the ſunſet, and the ſea.

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